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ABSTRACT

Student recruitment and retention at small colleges are considered, and Brunswick Foundation's Small College Program is described. An overview considers problems of small colleges (those with enrollments of 2,000 and less), and the Foundations's approach to meeting the needs of small colleges. The Foundation's Small College Program, which provides grants to reward colleges undertaking exceptional action programs, is outlined in terms of criteria for participation and program components. The Foundation's surveys to determine the main concerns of small colleges are described, and examples of typical survey questions and responses by college presidents are provided. Views of the Foundation on recruitment and retention issues facing small colleges are briefly explained. Additionally, small colleges' responses to the Foundations's recruitment/retention surveys are examined, based on a university team's analysis of survey results. Specific issues that are addressed include: market research, recruitment by the admissions office and auxiliary recruiters, meeting student needs through incentives and curriculum changes, student orientation, academic and social support, dropout prevention, and exit interviews. Content analysis procedures and results are also covered. (SW)

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STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN SMALL COLLEGES

COLLEGES OF PRIDE, DETERMINATION AND OPTIMISM

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THE BRUNSWICK FOUNDATION, INC.

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STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION
in
SMALL COLLEGES

Colleges of Pride, Determination, and Optimism

A Study of
The Brunswick Foundation's
Small College Program

The Brunswick Foundation
One Brunswick Plaza
Skokie, Illinois 60077

October 1982

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INTRODUCTION

This is the first in a series of booklets that may be developed to provide feedback to the small colleges that participated in the Brunswick Foundation's Small College Program.

Each year the Brunswick Foundation makes a survey of the needs of small colleges and develops a series of four or five questions that reflect some of the key concerns of these colleges. The Foundation then invites the small colleges to compete for grants by responding to these issues, setting forth the action plans that they are implementing on their respective campuses that contribute to strengthening the quality of education.

Since the majority of small colleges (those with enrollments 2,000 and under) throughout the United States have been participating in this Small College Program, it was felt that these colleges may find it helpful and of interest to note the types of programs, procedures, techniques, and activities being performed by other colleges. As a pilot project, the first issues selected by the Foundation to elaborate upon are Recruitment and Retention.

No attempt was made to capture each and every one of the colleges' programs on these issues. Instead, a sampling of the total submissions on Recruitment and Retention were selected at random by the Foundation and analyzed by a university team to reveal common trends.

To enable the reader to better understand the study made by the university, the Brunswick Foundation provides background on the rationale behind its Small College Program and describes aspects of Recruitment and Retention as it sees two of the key issues confronting the small college of today.

The Foundation is indebted to Professor Robert J. Menges of Northwestern University's Center for the Teaching Professions for serving as coordinator of this study and to Virginia Wenk who headed the team consisting of herself, Jovita Ross and Lovel Greene (all at the University Center for the Teaching Professions) who worked laboriously and in a tight time frame to finalize this study. Of course, without the continued encouragement and support year after year of the Brunswick Foundation Contributions Committee comprised of William L. Niemann, Robert C. Anderegg, Raymond E. Hartstein, Kenneth A. Marshall, Max E. McGrath, Jack F. Meyerhoff, Milton Rudo, and James F. Urbanek this Small College Program could not have succeeded as it has.

It is hoped that in some small way the Small College Program of the Brunswick Foundation assists the small independent colleges of the U.S. and provides some encouragement to continue improving the quality of their operations.

Ray Hartstein
Director, Personnel/Industrial Relations
Brunswick Corporation and
Administrator, Brunswick Foundation

BRUNSWICK FOUNDATION'S SMALL COLLEGE PROGRAM

(This section conveys background on how the Small College Program came into being and how it is now operating)

The Brunswick Foundation has a lengthy and continuing interest in higher education and has been especially sensitive to the challenges facing many small independent U.S. colleges. Being its number one priority, the Foundation annually allocates over 50% of its contributions to higher education.

Problems of Small Colleges

During the early 1970's there were some indicators that began to spell trouble for higher education, and particularly the "small privates." Demographers were predicting a reduction in eighteen year olds and both elementary and high schools were either closing or planning to close in a few years. By the mid-seventies many small colleges were beginning to encounter difficulties as a result of the environment of inflation, limited resources, declining enrollments, and critical competition.

This period which was marked by shrinking enrollments along with steady inflation started to test both institutions and individuals. The testing was more severe for smaller institutions than larger ones because the shrunken enrollments and higher costs pressed against a slimmer bulwark of reserves. 34% of America's private colleges were losing ground financially and were eating up their reserves. For some schools the crunch was fatal.

From 1970 to the mid-seventies, it was estimated that 49 small private four year colleges in the United States closed, and an additional 29 schools either merged with other colleges or shifted to public control. In the period that followed, as enrollments dropped, costs had risen, and funds became more limited; it was said that more than 300 small private colleges may be vulnerable to closure.

Thus, the Foundation felt that if reasonable policies and actions were not adopted then the problems of the next 15 years would not only result in the elimination of marginal small institutions (that we may get along without), but would also cause the closing of many more small colleges that give American higher education the important elements of quality and diversity.

Studies Made To Determine If Small College Needs Were Being Met

Realizing the predicament the small colleges found themselves in, the Brunswick Foundation set out to investigate what other corporations and foundations were doing for small colleges, examine its own educational programs with focus on the small independent schools, and then set out to provide some aid and encourage others to do likewise.

In "checking out" other corporations and foundations it was apparent that minimal efforts were being expended on behalf of these needy institutions. Some "tagged" their contributions for special projects or research, or for what they considered to be quality colleges that in their opinions were making contributions to society. Others leaned in the direction of providing funds to their favorite college because several members of the company were alumni, one or more of its members served on the college board, the college was in a plant community providing services to its employees, the college was one with which the company built a special relationship for recruiting or other purposes, or the college was a prestigious one with which they would like to be affiliated.

In a review of the Brunswick Foundation's educational contributions, it was noted that they were not too far afield from those of other corporations and foundations. Since its inception it made a number of direct grants, but in addition supported graduate research fellowships; financial assistance programs for colleges that provided new graduates as employees or assisted in educating its employees; scholarships for the handicapped, graduating high school seniors, and college undergraduates; and, support for a variety of higher education associations. Small colleges did receive funds from the Brunswick Foundation in the form of direct grants, contributions through the Educational Matching Gift Program, or through one of the many state associations of independent colleges.

Brunswick's Answers To Meeting The Plight Of The Small Colleges

State Associations of Independent Colleges

The Foundation, anxious to assist the small colleges, made its first new effort in 1975 with its state association contributions. Even though it had long been supporting these state associations, it felt that all states where there was a major presence of Brunswick employees should receive a contribution and the amount should be more equitable in proportion to the members in that state. The Foundation then developed a table that met these specifications and as a result new states were added for contributions, and the amounts for each state were readjusted. Each year the populations of Brunswick's employees are recalculated and state amounts are readjusted.

Educational Matching Gift Program Improved

"A second plug" came for the small college when the Educational Matching Gift Program was improved to enable the Foundation to match on a two to one basis any donation of an employee or director. Many small colleges throughout the U.S. benefited with immediate increased contributions.

A Small College Program Using Conventional Criteria

It was not until 1976, however, that the Brunswick Foundation embarked on its full-fledged Small College Program. In this program it used traditional quality criteria for the selection of colleges to receive grants; such as, the test scores for entrance, the ratio of faculty to students, the drop-out rate between freshmen and senior years, the number of students going on to graduate school, and the number of Ph.D.'s on the faculty. This format continued through 1978.

The Present Small College Program

Newly devised Criteria Established

The Foundation was not satisfied with this criteria for it was not convinced that these items necessarily contribute to excellence. For example, there is no relationship between having a Ph.D. and being a good teacher. The Foundation felt that it was essential to seek out those small colleges who are approaching the environment of the 1980's on a sound basis, maintaining and enhancing their quest for academic excellence while also planning for and dealing with growth and financial issues. Most people are aware of the small colleges with long established reputations for quality of learning; however, the Brunswick Foundation was interested in identifying some of the relatively unknown colleges that are continuing to pursue excellence. Therefore, it decided to look for standards of excellence in terms of demonstrable progress that a college is making to maintain its areas of quality and improve its areas of weakness. The Foundation felt that:

- those colleges that are demonstrating outstanding performances by specific action programs should be merited;
- small colleges should be encouraged to improve the effectiveness of their leadership and initiate and implement action programs to build and strengthen their respective colleges in a climate where survival is so essential;
- colleges should not be awarded grants on the basis of need alone, nor should the Foundation make or meet "challenge grants" that are becoming quite common; and,
- it should invite small colleges to participate rather than the Foundation reacting to proposals or making its own selections on conventional criteria.

Objective

The objective of the Small College Program was to seek out, encourage, recognize and reward those schools that are demonstrating performance excellence through implementation of action programs for the 1980's

How the Process Works

1. Small colleges are contacted to determine their most pressing needs. Typical areas of concern are:
 - Declining enrollments
 - Limited resources
 - Inflation
 - Critical competition
 - Quality of education
 - Innovation
 - Reduction of financial aid
 - Deterioration of physical facilities
2. A questionnaire of four or five questions per year is developed and is aimed at some of the prime concerns of the small colleges. An application form and description of the program are also prepared.

- a. Typical questions that were developed and appeared in past Foundation questionnaires to meet the concerns are as follows:

Enrollment

1. What are you doing to attract and retain students?
2. In what ways is the college improving its marketing efforts to affect enrollment?

Finance

1. What is the college doing to maintain financial stability or cause a turnaround on its financial position?
2. What are you, as President, doing to improve college operations, offset inflation, and run your college efficiently in the present economic environment?

Quality of Education

1. How do you define quality of education?
2. What are you doing to maintain or improve the quality of education at your institution?

Facilities

1. What has your college done to prevent necessary maintenance projects from being deferred and thus avoid deterioration and/or obsolescence of your physical facilities?
- b. Realizing that many small colleges do not have elaborate development departments, the questionnaire is made simple enough to be completed in short order.
- c. Efforts are made to enable the less known college who has limited resources and staff for proposal writing to be able to compete with the more prestigious college.
- d. The fact that colleges are bombarded with paperwork by government departments from which funds are requested, efforts are made to keep the process easy for submission by the colleges.
3. The questionnaire, program description and application form is sent to the college president of each small college whose enrollment is 2,000 or under.
 - a. The Brunswick Foundation takes the initiative and sends the data to the colleges inviting each to participate.
4. The questionnaire and applications are to be completed and forwarded to the Brunswick Foundation by a specific date each year.

- a. The data is developed by the President of the college, the development officer, or a designee of each of these.
- b. It is hoped that by having to write out what they are doing to improve their quality and strengthen their college, it will cause each to:
 - do a self analysis of their schools on every aspect called for in the questionnaire that may be contributing to quality;
 - re-examine and redefine other aspects of their college (as, mission, programs, staff, etc.);
 - redirect their efforts and get them to do things to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps" or accelerate efforts already "on the drawing board;"
 - look at their competition to see if they are keeping up; and,
 - consider implementation of new and/or innovative programs they may not have thought of before.
5. A team of university educators and businessmen assist the Brunswick Foundation in reading, evaluating the data submitted by the colleges and selecting the winners of the grants.
 - a. Criteria is established for each of the questions to be evaluated.
 - b. The evaluation team reads each college submission against the established criteria.
 - c. A college must receive consistent "high marks" on responses to all of the questions to be a winner.
6. The ten winning colleges receive an unrestricted grant for \$3,000 each.
 - a. Five awards are given to colleges with enrollments of 1,000 and under; five awards are given to those with enrollments of 1,001 to 2,000.
 - b. The checks are delivered personally, where possible, by Foundation members to the college campuses for presentation to the President and/or Board members.
7. Publicity is set forth in media including philanthropic journals, national education press, college news media and local press.
8. Sampling of the data submitted (not only of the winners, but by all colleges) may be compiled into a brochure and/or presented at a seminar to enable all to profit by the things that are being done in the small colleges today.
 - a. Brochures will be sent to all college presidents whose colleges participate.

Comments of College Presidents

Typical Comments of Winners

The winners of the awards were quite proud of their being selected. A few of the recipients are quoted, in part, with the following comments:

- "We do indeed take pride in being selected by the Brunswick Foundation and take heart that you and your colleagues saw fit to recognize our place among the first flight of small colleges in the country."
- "What you are doing for private higher education is very gratifying to us, and we will do all we can to measure up to your expectations."
- "We find the vote of confidence which you and the Brunswick Foundation have given to our college to be very important as it seeks to respond to the challenges of the times and the needs of its students."
- "I take pride in the fact that our college was able to demonstrate the standards of excellence demanded by your Selection Committee. You are to be commended for your sensitivity to the needs of small independent colleges for assistance in carrying out our missions."

Typical Comments of Non-Winners

It may also be interesting to note some of the comments of the non-winners:

- "While I regret that in view of the keen competition for the relatively limited number of such grants we were unsuccessful in this program, I want to commend you and your associates for the understanding of and the commitment to private higher education which is evidenced by the work of the Foundation."
- "The next decade will present difficult challenges for independent colleges. While we feel confident of our condition and ability to meet them, we solicit the continued interest of organizations like the Brunswick Foundation."
- "Success in each of the five areas outlined in your guideline is, of course, critical to the vitality and well being of any excellent liberal arts college."
- "We regret that our college was not among the recipients of your grants, but we recognize the difficulty of your task and applaud your efforts to encourage and support small independent colleges."
- "We were hoping for an affirmative reply, but are mindful of the wide participation and keen competition in the program."
- "Should the Brunswick Foundation develop similar programs, we would welcome the opportunity to participate."

Comments of Other Participants

Typical of the comments of small college presidents who are participating in the current program are:

- "Your program has helped us re-examine our goals to see how closely our program is 'mirroring' this mission."
- "We've been through an accrediting association self-study, but your questionnaire has caused us to consider new concepts for review of our total college program."
- "You certainly have recognized in your program the ingredients of a well run and successful college in today's small college market. Congratulations!"
- "Your innovative program 'hit the nail on the head' and awarded those items that benefit students of the institutions rather than those that are often designed to build institutional visibility, professional reputations or advance careers."
- "Your program strategy has instilled in many of us in the small college world to live by the adage, 'Never be satisfied with what you are already doing and always strive to do better.' Thanks for the push!"
- "Hats off to a funding agency that intends to reward those performing their jobs competently and with professionalism."

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

(This section sets forth the Foundation's view of the issues of Recruitment and Retention facing the small college)

Recruitment

In the 1960's students scrambled and begged for admission; today, colleges must find and coax them to the campus. Yes, enrollments are the concern of all of higher education. Educators studying demographics are fully aware of the thinning student ranks, the shrinking pool of high school graduates, the lessening of applications for admissions, and expenses that are deterring some potential students. Between 1979 and 1994, the number of 18 year olds will drop 26% -- from 4.3 million to 3.2 million. Most colleges, particularly small colleges, are going to have to come to grips with how to cope with an approximate 15% decline in enrollment.

Besides demographics, a number of other factors seem to affect enrollments. Regular announcements of increases in student tuition and fees, the reduction in financial aid from both the federal and state governments, rate of inflation affecting the income of supporting parents (many being laid off because of a depressed economy), and the difficulty of students getting jobs after graduation are some of the areas that are, no doubt, pondered by students and could further reduce the number of students who may attend colleges.

Obviously, not all colleges will be affected equally. Some will continue to attract more qualified students than they can admit while others, in spite of their best efforts, will experience enrollment losses. Therefore, each school cannot rely on national trends, but must review their own institutions and determine the effect it might have on them.

Most college administrators lived through periods of the baby boom and prosperity; they may or may not be experienced in managing decline and being able to cope with the difficult years ahead. In fact the predictors of gloom are saying that up to 900 small colleges, particularly the lesser known ones, may close in the next ten years because of declining enrollments.

But are administrators "sitting on their hands", or are they doing proper research, preparation, planning and taking specific actions to maintain their present enrollment levels and fortify themselves in case the crisis hits their realm? Some are attempting to determine why students have been coming to their college. They have concluded that if the "price is right", the proper curriculum and courses are being made available, the college is conveniently located, "proper" values are instilled in the students, the quality is high, etc., enrollments can be maintained. Other college administrators are attempting to lure new types of students other than the traditional 18 year olds coming out of high school. Some are trying to bolster their ranks with older students, part-time students, transfer students, foreign students, minority or ethnic students, female students, and graduate students. Still others, realizing they are in a buyer's market, are resorting to the "hard sell" and are using techniques and/or gimmicks used to sell autos or breakfast cereals. We understand that businessmen sitting on college boards had

advocated as long as 10 or 15 years ago that their colleges should do marketing research and utilize legitimate marketing techniques to get their share of the market, but were rebuffed until recently when the "going has been getting tough" and the term "marketing" became more fashionable in college circles. In this increasingly competitive market, all aspects of solid marketing (long successful in industry) has been borrowed by colleges to recruit the ever dwindling supply of students.

Retention

The other side of the coin on recruitment is retention, which may or may not be given much attention by colleges. To the educational researcher, it has been referred to as "attrition" -- a gradual, natural reduction in the number of students at an institution. Increasingly, this area is being referred to as "retention" -- the ability of the institution to keep students.

A successful retention program is as important to a college as a successful admissions program. New students arrive on campuses each fall with dreams of campus life and expect to walk down the aisle four years later and claim their prize -- the diploma. But for many these dreams and plans crack and fall apart; they run into problems that cause them to alter or abandon their plans. Statistically on a national basis, out of ten freshmen, four will graduate in four years; one will drop out to graduate later; one will drop out and not graduate; two will transfer and graduate elsewhere; and, two will transfer and then not graduate. Even though retention data is one of the best statistical measures of student satisfaction, it is more than that in times of declining pools of potential students; it is a financial necessity.

It may cost anywhere from \$400-\$500 to recruit a single student at a small college. It costs nothing additional to save a present student from leaving, in that the resources are already in place. A student retained is more beneficial than a student recruited.

But why do students leave? Some colleges are attempting to use a tool that industry has been using for years, the exit interview, to try to find out why students leave and sometimes get a disgruntled student to stay. Of course, the real reasons will not always come forth and not all students can be convinced to stay as evidenced from the statistics above.

Students rank financial problems high on their lists of reasons for leaving college, but research indicates that financial problems are not the primary reason they drop out. The "right college" or "college fit" theory is cited as one of the key reasons that students leave; that is, the degree to which values of the students correspond with those of the institution is the degree to which the student is likely to remain. Some students will give academic concern as their primary reasons for leaving; as, the programs they wanted were not available, the work is too hard, the grades received were too low, the classes were too large, they had difficulty in getting help, or the uncertainty about a major or career goals. If students' "gripes" are any indicator, the negative behavior of faculty comes into the scene with comments on inadequate teaching, failure to meet a class, cutting classes short, failure to get grades in promptly, and inaccessibility when they were needed

by students. The college environment comes in for its share of gripes whether it be the dorms or the meals. Of course, one should not overlook the problem of new freshmen making proper adjustments to their new environment, or young persons who decide to attend colleges but make uninformed or careless choices.

In view of these reasons for people leaving, some colleges are not only setting forth mandates to keep the admissions up but are also aware of the importance of admitting students who are likely to stay. Others are gathering information about the institution and its students and developing strategies to create satisfied customers. These strategies are too numerous to list but include renovation of physical environment, improving communications with students, attacking student problems early and effectively, providing a greater variety of academic support services, improving faculty student relationships, setting forth improvement campaigns on student services, and measures to improve teaching.

There is no guarantee that such efforts will lead to a significant reduction in the number of students leaving colleges before they graduate, but the hope is that over time increasing awareness of student concerns will translate into the creation of what retention specialists call a staying environment -- a place that cares about students.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION
IN
COLLEGES OF PRIDE, DETERMINATION, AND OPTIMISM

(The following is a description of a university team's analysis of the responses made by small U.S. colleges to the Brunswick Foundation's questions on recruitment and retention.)

Small colleges traditionally give students individual attention not available at larger private and public institutions. Faculty dedicated to liberal arts undergraduate education are challenged at such colleges to foster growth in individual students. But now the very future of these colleges is threatened because of changing demographic and economic conditions.

Small colleges increasingly depend upon supplementary sources of income, such as contributions from alumni and grants from private donations. The Brunswick Foundation has demonstrated its concern for small independent colleges through its Small College Program (described more in detail in the first section of this brochure). College presidents are invited to compete for ten unrestricted grants of \$3,000 each by writing brief responses to questions about their efforts to maintain quality education while competing in today's higher education market.

Application questions are open-ended in form. Thus, respondents present the information which they deem most relevant. Some chose to highlight their institution's staunch traditions; others emphasized change. Many gave a broad picture of their schools, while others concentrated on particularly strong or innovative components of their programs. Some were quite brief; others wrote at greater length.

The open format elicited responses which are rich and revealing and which require rather complex analysis (see Appendix A). This report discusses responses on two topics -- student recruitment and retention. Our analysis of a sample of the applications reveals both common trends and unique approaches.

In general, according to the responses of these presidents, small colleges appear to be facing their challenges with a spirit of undaunted pride, active determination, and guarded optimism. The following quotation captures the prevailing mood:

"The college is 150 years old; it has withstood two major depressions and three wars. We are confident that with proper planning and dedicated work we will be here for another 150 years."

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

This analysis focuses on colleges' efforts to recruit and retain students. This theme appears in two questions. A 1979 question asked, "In what ways have you improved your marketing efforts to affect your enrollment?" A 1981 question asked, "What are you doing to attract and retain students?" Despite differences in wording, these questions elicited common themes across the two years.

We look first at the area of recruitment to see how colleges maximize their contact and appeal in priority markets. "Change" is a key word, as we examine changing markets, changing roles and techniques in recruitment, and changing programs. Despite change, however, traditional curriculum content and recruitment practices provide continuity.

A college must be successful not only in recruiting students but also in retaining them, if enrollments are to remain stable. Therefore small colleges today make considerable investment in programs and services designed to improve student retention. We examine some of the mechanisms, both formal and informal, which respondents say are critical to retention efforts. Also discussed are the personnel with responsibility for retention, new student programs and support services offered, and measures for identifying and assisting high risks students. Special note is taken of the more informal features of small colleges which increase the likelihood of students remaining and completing their undergraduate education.

Although entries for the two years were analyzed separately, there are few readily apparent differences between them. Further, we found few discernible differences between responses made by colleges with enrollments under 1,000 and those with enrollments over 1,000. (This detailed analysis is summarized in Appendix B, along with the proportions of institutions which identified each of the themes introduced in our discussion.) Since the open ended questions did not elicit comparable responses from everyone, low percentages in particular categories do not necessarily mean a comparably low incidence in practice.

Identifying Markets

Aggressive marketing has become a way of life for college recruiters. In the world of business, marketing implies institution-wide commitment to targeting groups of potential customers and developing products and services which are more effective in meeting customer needs and wants than are those of competitors. It is no wonder that such principles are now commonly applied to college recruitment, given higher education's present predicament. As one applicant wrote:

"During 1979-80 the College* joins hundreds of private liberal arts institutions across the country in a cautious watch over applications for the coming year. Dire predictions by the College Entrance Examination Board point to fewer students available for enrollment through the next decade nationally. And fewer students means fewer colleges will be able to withstand the financial pressure of wide-spread decreases in enrollment."

* "The College" is substituted for an institution's name in order to protect the identities of applicants.

Market Research

In the effort to keep pace, colleges engage in a number of types of market research. Nearly a third of the colleges seek to identify markets of potential students by surveying populations such as current students, parents, applicants and high school students who reside in the target areas. Published reports or lists (e.g. Student Search Service of the College Entrance Examination Board and the ACT College Outcomes Measurement Project) are also used by many colleges and often help to simplify market identification. As a preliminary marketing tactic, one institution surveys three groups of high school students: 1) those who inquire about the College but do not apply; 2) those who apply, are accepted, but do not come; and, 3) those who apply, are accepted and enroll. The stated goals of this research are:

"to see how each constituency views the College in general, and how it views the College relative to competitive institutions and to look for indicators to determine why some students don't apply or don't accept. It will be possible then to correct misconceptions and develop marketing strategies for specific groups of potential students."

Of the benefits of such institutional research, another applicant states:

"By identifying the College's distinctive characteristics and marketing those special qualities in a responsible well-thought-out program, the Admissions programs presents students with the educational opportunities and choices which the College offers while giving attention to the potential students as individuals."

Consultants often assist with market research. Colleges have engaged professional firms to conduct market research, offer advice on initiating marketing programs, provide guidance in upgrading admissions procedures and personnel, develop promotional materials, and assist in long-range planning. Other institutions make creative use of existing talents, such as the college where a faculty sociologist was employed to analyze information about applicant pools.

Market research generates innovative marketing strategies. These strategies are quite diverse, but several general patterns can be discerned. Almost 25% of the respondents report focusing their efforts on particular populations. Colleges frequently choose either to expand or limit their targeted geographic area to better capture specific markets. A number of institutions concentrate their efforts on recruiting highly competent students. Faculty at one college have developed and instituted a three-year degree program for gifted students in an attempt to attract exceptional students. Recruitment efforts at another institution are directed toward students who display leadership potential.

"We have also improved our admissions operation by focusing our efforts on the students and parents who appreciate the kind of education we offer -- a program in the fundamental fields of the arts and sciences for the above-average student. Specifically, more attention has been given to visiting the better secondary schools, especially private schools with well-established reputations for producing good candidates for college. Special attention is given to those students who are involved in leadership roles in their high schools, such as student government officers, yearbook and newspaper editors, debaters, literary magazine staff, and good students who excel in athletics. One of the College's primary goals is that of producing leaders, and we place emphasis not only on academic achievement but also on leadership ability."

Schools with a religious orientation typically develop specialized strategies to appeal to students of their own religious affiliation. Church officials often participate in recruiting, and such schools may sponsor special functions for church youth groups. One church-affiliated institution conducts a week-long advertising campaign on six Christian radio stations with ads emphasizing its Christian character and Christian program offerings. The president of this institution also delivers religious messages on local radio. These activities supplement advertising in "Campus Life" magazine, a Christian magazine for high school and college age students.

Follow-Up

To increase the likelihood that prospective students who inquire about the college become applicants and that applicants become enrollees, over one-fourth of the colleges report using systematic procedures for follow-up. Many institutions personalize the follow-up; they may involve faculty, students and alumni who telephone students, write personal letters, or visit students in their homes. One respondent does it all:

"For high school seniors and junior college sophomores a very efficient follow-up system has been developed. As counselors travel about the state, a listing of students by town (by high school or junior college) is pulled from the computer and a postcard is sent telling the student when and where the counselor will be available in his area. Once the counselor returns to the office, a handwritten card is sent thanking the student for the visit and from there a systematic series of contacts is made involving department chairmen, extracurricular sponsors (band, publications, sports), etc. These involve mailings and telephone follow-up to mailings. In addition, a birthday card is sent to each 'Prime-prospect -- ready for the College the upcoming fall.' Once the application is received, a system of follow-up involving some type of contact every two weeks up to and through the registration process is made."

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Accepted applicants also receive attention. One college sponsors congratulations parties in major population areas one to two weeks after acceptance letters are mailed. At these functions accepted high school students and their parents are joined by a team of faculty, administrators, and students. This same institution utilizes a phoning program in which parents of currently enrolled students call the parents of newly accepted students. Another institution has developed a brochure especially for the accepted but undecided student, reassuring them that being undecided is an opportunity rather than a problem. To help such students make their decision, a number of colleges also plan campus visits for these students and their parents, intended to give them a closer look and provide personal contact with those who may be able to answer their questions. Because financial aid is an important factor in the decision process for many students, a number of colleges offer assistance in completing financial aid forms.

All of these practices reflect special attention for the prospect who has taken the step of application and met the criteria of the school. No one wants to lose a potential student who has come that close to enrolling.

New Markets

Nontraditional student populations are eagerly sought. Colleges may alter curriculum and schedule in order to become more attractive to them. Adult students constitute the largest new market. They may be seeking an original degree, striving to improve their occupational status or simply hoping to enrich their lives. Adult women in particular are returning to school in growing numbers. One college attempts to attract women from diverse backgrounds through radio and newspaper advertising and through special seminars:

"In addition to the programs which the College stresses in its outreach to women, this year the College held a unique program for women. On August 29th, the College sponsored a seminar entitled: 'Everything a Woman Wants to Know About Going Back to College, But Is Afraid To Ask.' The half-day seminar included topics on the first day of classes, the new directions and traumas that arise when housewives and mothers return to school, and a panel discussion including the husbands of women who returned to college. This seminar was publicized in newspapers and on television throughout the surrounding metropolitan area, and was well-attended, with 60 women present."

Several institutions report new efforts to serve the business community. The following quote exemplifies such programs:

"The College responds to corporate/community education needs in various ways -- by opening its regular undergraduate program to qualified area students, by offering business executive avenues to broaden their knowledge and expertise as special students and as matriculated candidates for degrees from the College, and by providing acculturation programs for foreign executives and their wives, as well as American

couples going abroad. In addition, College faculty teach in-house courses designed for advanced employees: multicultural understanding, language proficiency, and communications skills. A special certificate program, Management Development for Women, is designed to facilitate upward mobility for women in middle management."

Still other colleges channel energies into recruitment of specific minority groups. At one institution, admissions personnel work closely with Indian leaders to counsel residents of nearby Indian reservations about admissions. More typically, recruitment efforts are directed toward inner city Black and Hispanic high school students.

Recruiting

Responses about recruitment cluster in three areas: professional admissions staff, auxiliary personnel also involved in recruiting, and particular recruitment activities.

Admissions Office

Much has changed recently in admissions offices. Adding admissions counselors to work with minority populations is one of several changes in personnel. Almost 25% of the responses mention expanded or reorganized admissions office staffing (33% for the 1979 applications). In some cases duties are more clearly defined or reassigned. For instance, one institution's reorganization produced an Assistant Director for Operations to oversee the information system, a Field Representative System to clarify regional responsibilities of Admissions Officers, and a restructured Division of Continuing Education to handle recruitment of those out of high school more than three years. A number of colleges seek to upgrade the skills of existing admissions personnel by sponsoring continuing education programs.

"During the summer of 1979, the College hired a well-known consultant in Admissions to help improve staff skills in management, planning, and marketing, to implement more effective recruitment concepts, and to revise communications and systems procedures. Ongoing professional training programs and regular meetings provide a forum for the staff to share new ideas, effective approaches, and problems which arise in their fieldwork."

One college has created what it calls its New Student Development Program which combines the Admission and Public Relations Offices, and other colleges report similar comprehensive organizational schemes.

Auxiliary Recruiters

Admissions personnel may have the primary responsibility for recruitment, but at most colleges they comprise only the core of the recruitment team. Administrators, faculty, students, alumni and parents of students may all be involved in recruiting activities. One college has made unique use of faculty:

"During the last two summers we have employed about a dozen of our faculty members visiting potential and returning students in their homes throughout the area from which we draw most of our students. These 'summer recruiters' meet with students in their homes, get acquainted with them and their parents, and answer whatever questions they might have about the college and the students coming here to school. They are often effective in expediting the admissions process -- getting transcripts and recommendations in, putting the right people in touch to answer questions about financial aid and scholarships, verifying room reservations in the dormitories, providing information about part-time employment on campus, and the like."

At another college, even the president of the institution becomes directly involved in the recruitment drive:

"As President, I am personally involved in the admissions effort. I hold a series of Presidential luncheons for top-ranking student prospects. Several dozen students and their parents are invited each year to be my guests for luncheon on the campus. We have found this series of luncheons to be most effective, and over 90% of the students who attend a luncheon later enroll in the University."

More often it is alumni who are able to provide the degree of personal attention to students that may be needed for timely follow-up. One college boasts of 280 alumni participating in 41 "networks" across the country to encourage prospective students. A phonathon, a recruitment technique reported by several colleges, was made easier for one institution through the efforts of its alumni network.

Recruitment Activities

A wide variety of recruitment activities are employed. Nearly 50% of the schools mention that institutional literature has been developed especially for recruiting. Many speak of resources allocated for print and audiovisual materials to present a positive image of the institution. In a number of cases consultants have been hired to offer advice on text and design. Several schools publish newsletters for prospective students.

"We plan to continue this year with a publishing project we began last year. That was the issuing of an 8-page periodical entitled PREVIEWS. This publication was mailed to all students in grades 11 and 12 of our feeder school. The various issues focused on questions of concern and interest to students contemplating study on this campus -- academic programs available, procedures for selecting a major, ways to make most effective use of one's time, issues involved in adjusting to college life -- a variety of news and feature stories aimed at orienting high school students

into thinking about college studies generally, and, more specifically, about the possibilities of study at the College."

Visits to high schools and community colleges are the most common recruitment activity, with at least 35% of the colleges reporting use of this method. This technique was mentioned more frequently by schools applying in 1981 (42%) than by those applying in 1979 (24%). Visits seem to be made most often by admissions personnel, but increasingly faculty and alumni participate, sometimes in teams. College personnel visit church youth groups, junior high schools and even shopping malls in their search for potential students.

Outreach programs conducted by college faculty serve a public relations function. One college implemented a "Contact" program through which faculty members conducted classes, workshops, demonstrations, and lectures. Members of the faculty and research staff of another institution designed a "Visiting Scientist Program" which includes both formal presentations and informal discussions for high school, junior high schools and community youth organizations.

Campus visits by prospective students have taken on new features. One school reports sponsoring a "College for a Day", program during which students attend three classes of their choice while their parents attend information and financial aid sessions. Several institutions plan longer weekend visits, often for undecided applicants and their parents. Current students often act as tour guides or overnight hosts for such visits.

"Activities for the weekends are designed to give prospective students (and their parents) an opportunity to get to know each other and current students and to see the college first-hand in a way different from the typical college visit. Open houses, symposia, and question and answer sessions complement the experience of living in a University residence hall for the weekend."

Some schools add more substance to campus visits through workshops and courses for high school students. Often offered during the summer months, such programs give students an opportunity to experience all aspects of college life. Seminars, fairs, festivals and competitions have also been offered in the arts, sciences and business fields. One college hosts an extended "Opportunity Conference" for Native American students potentially interested in careers in science and technology. This program brings Native American students and their teachers to the campus for several weeks to attend classes and live in dormitories.

When personal visits are not feasible, less directed strategies are employed. Mailings are targeted using computer-generated lists of names. By 1979, 26% of the colleges already reported using newly installed computer or word processing equipment for this purpose. The telephone is a standard tool in college recruiting. One president extolls the benefits of easy phone contact:

"We recently installed, on an experimental basis, two WATTS lines for multiplied telephone contacts with potential, new, and returning students. These lines permit quick and direct communication between personnel in the admissions office and potential students. They also allow for direct and personal contact between the dormitory deans, teachers, and administrators and the students and their families."

A small number of institutions have installed "800" lines to enable interested students to make free calls to the campus.

Public media have assumed an increasingly prominent role in marketing efforts.

"The college often sends out press releases to local newspapers informing the community of developments at the College. By informing the community of our achievements, we can perform additional outreach which assists our enrollment efforts."

One school repeats a particular theme using several media.

"The college's advertising is, then, geared around the theme, '_____ College. Have we ever entered your mind?' and consists of print ads in the high school papers of target schools, in diocesan church publications sports programs, and a city magazine; considerable use of radio, including spots on two youth-oriented stations and one station with wide parent and adult-learner listenership; and, limited use of signage and television."

Another describes its increasing use of television:

"Our reliance on television as a marketing device has increased in recent years. In addition to our television advertising campaign, a 20-minute special on the College was shown on April 7th of this year at no cost to the College. The special program focused on the educational role of the College in the surrounding metropolitan community and included interviews with members of the College's faculty and staff, and with students attending classes at the College."

A third institution plans to purchase a 5000 watt radio station "to tell the 'story' of the university, acquaint the community with its presence, and provide music in a classical and jazz format."

In many cases advertising promotes a particular image:

"Our advertising indicates our emphasis on small classes, personalized instruction, and an informal atmosphere, which is more conducive to learning and study. Additionally, our advertising stresses a second theme which is vital to our outreach efforts. The theme of 'Where the Student Counts; is more than a marketing approach for the College, it is one of the fundamental precepts by which the College is operated. The College's advertising mentions that the student is considered to be more than another Social Security number."

The use of themes is common, and most often the themes emphasize the personalized atmosphere of a small college.

One college uses display cards in transit authority buses and trains. Another carried out a "blitz" advertising campaign, including booths set up in shopping malls. "Know Your Hometown College Day" was the theme of an open house for local community residents. Student promotional touring groups of singers, musicians, or dramatists act as goodwill ambassadors for a number of institutions.

Each of these innovations represents an attempt by officials to market the school by highlighting its particular characteristics and aiming at a particular audience.

Addressing Student Needs

These recruitment activities give considerable attention to student needs, enabling colleges to emphasize incentives for students to attend that particular institution and to stress curricular features which appeal to certain students.

Incentives

The most frequently reported incentive is financial, with 25% of the colleges detailing their efforts to provide financial assistance. One institution works to increase scholarship benefits and categories using a four-pronged approach:

- 1) matching funds for out-of-state students;
- 2) matching funds for denominational scholarships;
- 3) scholarships for commuter students; and,
- 4) alumni (individuals and club groups) have increased scholarship funds and have become more active in recruiting.

A trend toward awarding scholarships on the basis of merit alone has appeared. One school awards four merit scholarships annually to incoming freshmen based on a competitive examination and faculty interviews. In one scholarship program, featured in Change Magazine, students are awarded a given dollar amount based on ACT scores (e.g., an ACT score of 25 earns a scholarship of \$1000). One benefit of competitive scholarship programs is an increase in the number of applications from more competent students.

"The College has initiated an extensive scholarship program for students based on academic ability rather than need. The goal is to reestablish the College as a selective institution, by attracting National Merit Finalists and Semi-Finalists, as well as exceptional students recommended by their high school principal, headmaster/mistress, guidance counselor or community leader. By offering these scholarships based on academic achievement, we expect a gradual but steady increase in both the quantity and quality of students attending the College."

Other approaches to financial incentives include making all possible efforts to keep tuition costs to a minimum, with a few institutions pledging to new students no tuition increase for the next four years. Other institutions seek to help the student financially by providing campus employment and work-study programs. Indirect financial assistance is provided at one college in the form of reduced course tuition for those registering for a carpool.

Other incentives are not financial. One college sponsors a program called "College Credit in Escrow," offering high school juniors and seniors an opportunity to earn college credit. Nearly 50% of the participants go on to apply to that college. Others describe desirable features of the physical environment or social milieu, including remodeled facilities, intramural sports, socio-cultural events, and extracurricular activities. For adult students, many schools have instituted more flexible scheduling, with courses and services available during evening and weekend hours. A few colleges describe special programs which make it possible for working adults to complete an entire degree during weekend hours (i.e., Weekend College). Extension sites at conveniently accessible locations (e.g., downtown "brown-bag" course offerings) also attract new adult markets. At least one college provides a day care center for its students to make enrollment more practical for women with young children. Finally, it is noteworthy that the most frequently mentioned of all presumed incentives is the personalized atmosphere characteristic of the small college.

Curriculum Changes

Small colleges find a conflict between meeting the needs of career-minded students and preserving the integrity of their liberal arts mission. They deal with this tension in a variety of ways:

"Without sacrificing the values of the traditional liberal arts curriculum, the College has added certain programs in recent years that provide students with pre-professional options."

"The combination of the traditional and the new, the academic and the practical, in the context of a women's college has helped the College to survive and maintain a continual growth."

"Among liberal arts colleges, the College is singularly affirmative about career-oriented programming, seeing no conflict in a broad education and the acquisition of a set of practical skills. This idea is at the base of all our marketing efforts."

"The College is a liberal arts college which is mindful of the need for a curricular structure which will enable students to prepare for a future life which includes, but is not limited to, employment. Hence, the College offers a pluralistic curriculum which emphasizes traditional liberal arts education so that students are prepared for later cultural opportunities, leisure, career changes, the exercise of civic responsibilities, etc., but which also provides programs and courses within various departments that are of immediate relevance to students' concerns with obtaining employment upon graduation. We believe that it is neither wise nor desirable to change this emphasis."

Over 20% of the responding colleges describe the addition of career-oriented degrees or majors. The necessity of this response can be best understood in the following context:

"New programs that are financially effective and efficient (e.g., Computer Science), new modes of delivery (extension sites and some TV courses), and new markets (supervisory personnel at work sites) have been initiated and others are being discussed as part of a total marketing strategy in the light of our best estimates and projections about the cooperative, competitive, economic, social, political and legal environments of the next two decades."

Advanced degree programs or associate degree programs have been added to the conventional baccalaureate offerings of a few colleges. Most frequent, however, are new degree concentrations. One church-related women's college has added Bachelor's degrees in Criminal Justice System Administration, Accounting, Banking and Finance, Business Management and Administration, Security Administration and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling as well as Associate Degrees in Nursing and Business Administration. An Appalachian college has established bachelor's degree programs in Game and Fish Management, Social Work, Criminal Justice, Mining and Reclamation, Applied Art and Applied Science.

Many changes involve the creation of programs which allow for greater freedom and flexibility. Students participating in an open curriculum at one college build on a small core of liberal arts courses, electing one of several interdisciplinary concentrations or planning a program of their own invention. Students at the same institution have the option of an off-campus term during which they conduct an independent study focusing on another city from a multidisciplinary standpoint. External Degree programs offered by several institutions allow students to complete an entire degree through

independent study. A number of other colleges offer credit for a variety of internships and practicums. For those who wish to receive credit for life experience, a few colleges offer credit by examination. "Project Work/Learn," initiated by one of the 1981 applicants, permits students and faculty to design independent studies, and enables faculty to undertake internships in business, government and industry, thereby acquiring experiences in the world of work to share with their students. For those who wish to learn without pursuing a degree or obtaining credit, many non-degree and lifelong learning programs are described. Some of these non-credit programs are especially designed for local industry, business, government and service organizations. Learners may also elect to participate in non-traditional formats featuring self-paced courses, open registration, inter-term courses, and institutes. Accepting such bold curricular revisions has enabled small colleges to attract markets they might otherwise never have reached.

Enrollment Outcomes

Despite predictions of declining enrollments, these smaller colleges seem to be holding tenaciously to their segment of the student market.

"The demographics are clear. Between now and 1993 there will be a 34% decline in the numbers of high school graduates. We are however confident that our long range planning, our marketing and retention activities, our attention to detail, and our current recruitment momentum will allow us to meet the enrollment goals we have established."

The applications provide evidence that the small colleges continue to be strong competitors in the enrollment battle. Of all the schools reporting, over half remained stable in enrollment. Approximately 9% experiences a loss of 10% or more in their total enrollment over the four years for which data were gathered. Surprisingly, over 30% report enrollment figures showing a gain of 10% or more over the four years. Statements made by some of the colleges imply that they have indeed conquered the problem of declining enrollments: "The trend toward declining enrollment has been reversed;" "Applications for next fall are 20% ahead of last year this time." Enrollment figures seem to support a conclusion that these schools are standing their ground against the demographic realities.

Retention

In general, retention was discussed less fully than recruitment in responses from these colleges. No doubt this is due in part to wording of the 1979 question which did not explicitly mention retention.

Retention is sometimes seen as "the shared responsibility of all," but 10% of the respondents mentioned the Office or Dean of Student Affairs as responsible for retention, and approximately 18% reported a retention committee or task force which monitors and improves retention. Often such committees are composed of administrators, faculty and students. In one case the committee was chaired by the College President and included department and class advisors, student representatives, dormitory directors, the admissions director and the Dean of Students.

Another college emphasizes the faculty's role in retention:

"Finally as an incentive to student retention, faculty members are made aware of the importance of student retention by something of a profit-sharing system. After the audit year is complete and the College knows where it stands fiscally, salary supplements are written for all personnel. At the same time the personnel are advised that the College's ability to continue following this policy rests on its ability to maintain certain student levels. The faculty are informed that the continuation of the supplements is not guaranteed, but contingent on funds and that those funds depend on having a student enrollment."

A designated committee or office for retention was more frequently reported by the smaller (enrollment under 1000) schools.

New Student Orientation

A variety of freshman orientation programs are described as enhancing student retention. Such programs may involve faculty and upperclassmen as mentors.

No longer is a "single isolated week" of orientation the prototype; a number of orientation programs span the first semester or even the entire first year of a student's education. Several institutions offer formal freshman orientation courses, as described in the following:

"In addition, all freshmen are enrolled in the fall quarter in a course informally called ACT I, the freshman section of the Core Contemporary Thought sequence. The same faculty and peer advisors who are responsible for orientation at the beginning of the school year serve as instructors for the ACT I program. The ACT I course serves to solidify relations formed during the orientation week and formally extends the freshman's transitional period through the first academic quarter. Topics covered in ACT I include: 'How to Use a Syllabus;' 'Professors are People, Too;' 'Time Management;' 'Study Skills;' 'Active Listening;' 'Values Clarification;' 'Assertiveness Training;' 'Career Exploration;' and 'Academic Advisement.'"

Such courses make orientation an "integrated part of the first year of general education curriculum," and are seen as playing a vital role in retention.

Academic and Social Support

Many institutions recognize the importance of a comprehensive orientation program, but an even greater number see the need for continuing formal support services. Nearly one half of the institutions responding (1981) describe efforts to provide a strong academic advising system. Some offer special training for faculty advisors, while others have designed new advising

handbooks. Many speak of their career counseling and placement services as key elements in retaining students.

A variety of learning assistance services (e.g., comprehensive learning centers, writing, math or tutorial centers), as well as personal and spiritual counseling, are being made available; nearly 30% report one or more such service. In some cases, services are oriented toward helping underprepared students. One institution, for instance, designed a "remedial" packet to help students "make up deficiencies in English, Math and Study Skills to enable them to successfully complete their college studies." Others describe services oriented toward personal enrichment, such as workshops concerning stress reduction, test anxiety, interpersonal skills, human sexuality, career assessment and vocational choice. Sometimes peers are the helpers, thereby making use of students' effectiveness in helping other students.

Because financial problems may affect a student's decision to leave, several colleges mentioned financial aid and student employment as crucial to retention efforts. One institution reportedly makes a commitment to meet the financial aid needs of all qualified students. Another college reports:

"The availability of financial aid is also a factor in student retention. Currently, 73% of all students attending the College receive some sort of financial aid assistance. There are currently 14 grant, loan or scholarship programs on campus that have increased greatly over the past several years. During the 1977-78 academic year, \$140,000 was available for on-campus job salaries. In 1980-81, well over \$230,000 is available for work/study employment. Student identification with the institution through an on-campus job also aids greatly in retention."

Personalized attention is the special strength of the small college, a strength capitalized on by almost all the applicants in their retention efforts. Most faculty and administrators foster an open-door policy. One institution extends this policy all the way to the President's Office:

"Administrative offices operate with the open-door policy--any student can make an appointment with the President to discuss any topic in question. It is not out of the ordinary for a student to walk into the President's office and be able to see him immediately. Concerns raised by the students are then shared with the appropriate office. There are two major advantages resulting from this type of relationship between students, faculty and administration: 1) it allows for increased contact between student, faculty and administration; 2) it allows for greater sharing of information between faculty and administration."

Special faculty-student communication programs have been designed by some institutions. One college instituted a campus-wide "Dialogue Day," "in which the total campus community (Professors, students, administrators, clerical staff and maintenance staff) share 'strokes and pinches' and 'concerns and compliments' about the College." Another institution holds a "Mastering Your Life's Director" day at which all members of the college community meet "to share information; to acknowledge achievements of students, faculty, staff; and to expose the college community to ideas, concepts and experiences consistent with a quality liberal arts education."

Student participation in college governance and as voting members on key committees is also a way of increasing involvement and commitment. At one college, students work with administration to consider "alternative ways to earn credit, part-time programs, individually-designed majors and multiple degrees." Other institutions have a student member on the Board of Trustees or allow students an active role in faculty recruiting and evaluation. Student involvement is almost always welcomed, and in some cases is expected. One school warns its students, "If you came here to be entertained, you may have made a mistake; but if you came here to become involved, we need you."

Preventive Measures

Administrators realize that the rate of attrition is high nationally and that additional specific preventive measures are needed to keep the institutional rate to a minimum. Prevention starts with well-articulated plans to insure that recruitment practices lead to the best possible fit between student and institution. One institution which seeks to educate the academically superior student sees this connection between its admission and retention efforts: "Our high...rate of retention is primarily the result of the high caliber of students we have. Academic motivation is one of the most important criteria of the admissions decision." Another institution speaks of its attempts "to ensure the accuracy of information and image communicated to prospective students."

Periodic assessment of student satisfaction is yet another method small colleges use to prevent attrition. The degree of personalization on these campuses is obvious in the statements they have made about such efforts. At one school, commuter students are phoned each month to check on their satisfaction. Another college conducted two formal surveys and reports:

"The overall results of these surveys indicate a high degree of student satisfaction with college services, programs and personnel. Survey results showed that 87% of full-time on-campus students and 91% of full-time off-campus students felt that faculty members were 'helpful' or 'very helpful' to them. Students were also asked to what degree faculty care about students. 83% of full-time on-campus and 89% of off-campus students indicated that faculty were 'interested' or 'very interested' in them."

Conclusions from such assessments sometimes lead to action. For example, one institution developed proposals to remodel the student union and renovate dormitories.

Early warning systems have been instituted by many colleges. A few schools identify at entry high risk students who receive special supportive services. One college developed a list of 15 early warning signals to help advisors identify those students not experiencing success in college. Such early warning systems are reported by 30% of the institutions with fewer than 1,000 students and almost 25% of the institutions of over 1,000 students. The smaller schools also frequently report referral systems to guide these students to appropriate personnel and services.

Exit Interviews

Despite all efforts some students do leave college, and a number of institutions attempt to determine why students leave. This is usually done either through exit interviews or questionnaires. Of these attempts, one respondent states, "We have conducted many studies to determine why students decide to leave the College and we have found no one answer that commands attention as the 'answer.'" It seems more likely that students' reasons for leaving college are numerous, and that many small colleges have wisely adopted a number of mechanisms for dealing with a few of the common contributing factors.

Retention Outcomes

Some programs report success in keeping their attrition rates below the national average of 37%, citing rates as low as 15% and 7%.

At least 15% of the colleges report improvement in retention over time. Improvement is attributed to a combination of factors, including recruitment practices:

"Student retention rates are the best in recent College history, improving every year since 1977. While this may be attributed to the increased staffing and programs of the Reading and Writing Center, two other factors cannot be underestimated. The College became more selective in admission standards beginning in 1976, contrary to the practice of many liberal arts colleges; and, with the refinement of our admissions marketing, we feel that students have a clearer understanding of the College and its expectations before their arrival on campus."

Of the factors crucial to success with retention on that campus, another applicant states:

"Perhaps one of the most important is its effort to ensure the accuracy of information and image communicated to prospective students about the University. A second important commitment relevant to retention is the financial aid policy of meeting the need of all qualified students. In addition, an effective faculty advisor program, administrative monitoring and counseling of marginal students, and

extensive and well-provided student services all have contributed to a retention rate that has gone from 80% ten years ago to 90% today."

Cooperation Among Institutions

Recruitment and retention are increasingly seen as responsibilities of everyone at the college. At some institutions people have been quite resourceful in developing techniques to maximize contact with potential students and to increase satisfaction and success of current students.

The commonality of practices across institutions suggests that schools have not developed recruitment and retention strategies in isolation. A number of institutions participate in consortiums focused on marketing research. For instance, a Christian College Consortium of 15 schools has sponsored a joint marketing research program. Several colleges joined regionally to sponsor campus tours for prospective students or for guidance counselors who travel as a group from other geographic areas. The Council of Independent College (formally the Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges) also has helped colleges with cooperative recruitment and retention efforts.

Cooperative projects allow schools to pool resources in solving their common problems and should prove to be cost-effective. Despite the limited pool of available students, an entirely competitive stance toward increasing enrollments would be detrimental to both small colleges and to students.

Appendix A

Content Analysis Procedures

Content analysis provided a systematic and objective method of categorizing responses to these questions. Six steps were used: sampling, establishing preliminary categories, checking reliability, refining the categories, rechecking reliability, and selecting examples. Analysis was done by three raters.

Recruitment and Retention

The sample for this question was chosen from the entire group of 1979 and 1981 applications by the Brunswick Foundation's executive. The 1981 applications were grouped into Category A, colleges with enrollments under 1000, and Category B, colleges with enrollments over 1000. A total of 209 proposals were analyzed, 74 from the 1979 entries and 135 from 1981 (76 in Category A and 59 in Category B). The modal response was one page in length, but responses ranged from one-half page to five pages.

Each reader analyzed five randomly selected applications from each of the three sample groups in order to identify key concepts, common categories, and themes regarding recruitment and retention. This analysis yielded 10 categories and 88 themes for "recruitment" and 8 categories and 51 themes for "retention." A preliminary interrater reliability check revealed these categories and themes to be too narrowly defined. Applications were then rotated and reread with appropriate alteration of the original categories: 8 categories and 51 themes for "recruitment" and 6 categories and 21 themes for "retention." For this analysis, interrater reliability approximated 95%. The remaining applications were then analyzed according to these categories and themes. (Categories are enumerated in Appendix B.)

Finally, after the results of this analysis were synthesized, applications were read once more. Unique and exemplary programs, concepts, and action plans were identified, and illustrative quotations were noted.

Limitations

Conclusions drawn from the content analysis are limited by the retrospective nature of the data and by the characteristics of respondents. The self-selected, purposive sample limits generalizability. Applicants are considerably varied, nevertheless, and appear to be representative of small liberal arts colleges in America.

The open-ended nature of the questions and their short answer format present difficulties for interpreting percentages. Failure to mention a characteristic or practice does not necessarily imply its absence at a given institution. Comparisons across time also raise problems. A practice considered innovative in one year may be taken for granted in another; a practice considered innovative by one institution may be standard practice in another.

Advantages

The limitations of this question format are clearly outweighed by a noteworthy advantage. Like a projective test, these open-ended questions reveal how presidents of small colleges choose to present themselves and their institutions. Replies to the questions were as rich and varied as respondents wished to make them. The analysis preserves that richness and variety.

Appendix B

Content Analysis: Recruitment and Retention

<u>Categories/Themes</u>	<u>Percent Mentioning Category</u>		
	<u>1979</u> (n=74)	<u>1981</u> Under 1000 (n=76)	<u>1981</u> Over 1000 (n=59)
<u>Recruitment*</u>			
I. MARKET RESEARCH AND STRATEGIES			
1. Use of consulting firm	27	12	12
2. Use of published reports and lists	32	14	12
3. Institutional market surveys/analyses	41	34	29
4. Added marketing personnel, committees, etc.	12	4	8
5. Directed efforts toward specifically identified populations	32	13	20
6. Directed efforts toward more competent students	9	9	20
7. Planned follow-up of potential students or applicants	27	28	29
II. NEW STUDENT MARKETS			
1. Women	5	9	8
2. Non-traditional ages	20	16	20
3. Minorities	12	5	7
4. Transfer	5	7	5
III. ADMISSIONS OFFICE			
1. Strengthen personnel	34	24	15
2. Specialized continuing education for personnel	16	8	2
3. Added information processing equipment	26	5	3
IV. AUXILIARY RECRUITERS			
1. Faculty	32	38	37
2. Administrators/trustees	8	11	19
3. Students	24	32	29
4. Church representatives	16	9	15
5. Alumni volunteers	51	37	41

*Some differences in percentages between 1979 and 1981 responses may be attributable to differences in the application questions.

Categories/Themes

Percent Mentioning Category		
1979	1981	1981
(n=74)	Under 1000 (n=76)	Over 1000 (n=59)

V. RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Public media	36	21	17
2. Institutional literature	51	38	39
3. Direct (targeted) mailings	19	28	32
4. Personal letters	24	18	19
5. Phone calls	23	30	29
6. Promotion of college image/traditions/ themes	23	11	14
7. Visits to high schools and community colleges	24	42	42
8. High school programs presented by college faculty	9	10	15
9. College campus program for high school personnel	11	9	3
10. Campus visits for high school students and parents	27	42	19
11. Workshops or special assistance with financial aid	7	13	5
12. Visits to youth groups (churches, camps, etc.)	7	16	5
13. Special programs designed to give high school students exposure to campus	9	14	12

VI. STUDENT INCENTIVES

1. Scholarship/financial aid	19	21	34
2. Tuition incentives	5	4	7
3. Personalized approach	14	25	15
4. Campus environment or physical improvements on campus	11	24	15
5. Social/cultural milieu	3	7	12
6. Special sports programs	1	12	2
7. Flexible scheduling	16	5	0

VII. CURRICULUM CHANGES

1. Add non-degree programs (certification, etc.)	7	3	7
2. Add new degree programs (AD, Adv., Ext.)	8	4	15
3. Add career or pre-professional majors	18	24	22
4. Add internship/externship programs	1	14	8
5. Evening division added	7	5	8
6. Weekend division added	7	4	10
7. Notes tension between change and liberal arts tradition	5	7	7

Categories/Themes

Percent Mentioning Category		
1979	1981	1981
(n=74)	Under 1000 (n=76)	Over 1000 (n=59)

I. ENROLLMENT OUTCOMES

1. Remains stable (10% change)	58	47	51
2. Fluctuating	0	7	7
3. Steady decrease	14	11	2
4. Steady increase	26	36	36
5. Uninterpretable	2	0	5

Retention

I. DESIGNATED RESPONSIBILITY FOR RETENTION

1. Office/Dean of Student Affairs	5	18	5
2. Retention Committee/Task Force	2	30	22

II. NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

1. Faculty/student mentors	2	16	10
2. Pre-registration academic counseling	0	20	10
3. Extended orientation program for freshmen (e.g. special year-long course, "survival" training)	2	14	23

III. ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

1. General reference services	0	14	14
2. Learning assistance services (including Learning Resource Center, Writing Center, Math Center, Tutorial Services)	0	22	37
3. Academic advising	1	46	44
4. Personal counseling	1	26	27
5. Career and placement counseling	2	39	37
6. Personalized atmosphere	0	43	19
7. Student participation in college governance	0	14	6
8. Student involvement in all aspects of college life	0	33	10

Categories/Themes

Percent Mentioning Category		
1979	1981	1981
(n=74)	Under 1000 (n=76)	Over 1000 (n=59)

IV. PREVENTIVE MEASURES

1. Pre-admission fit between student and college	0	16	20
2. Early warning system for students in difficulty	0	30	23
3. Referral system for student services	0	16	3

V. EXIT INTERVIEWS

1. Yes (e.g., written questionnaires or face-to-face)	0	17	14
2. No indication	100	83	86

VI. RETENTION OUTCOMES

1. Indicators of improvement	1	25	20
2. Always high - no problem	0	0	5